

James Buchanan

JAMES BUCHANAN



FILLMORE
13th President
1850 — 1853



PIERCE
14th President
1853 — 1857



Painting by George P. A. Healy; in the collection of the Corcoran Gallery of Art



The United States Flag had 31 stars when Buchanan took office.



LINCOLN
16th President
1861 — 1865



JOHNSON
17th President
1865 — 1869

15TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES 1857-1861

BUCHANAN, *byoo KAN uhn*, **JAMES** (1791-1868), served as President in the critical years just before the Civil War. Many issues divided the nation, but slavery was the main cause of argument. Buchanan personally opposed slavery. But, as President, he insisted that the Constitution protected slavery and that the laws must be obeyed.

When 7 of the 15 slave states seceded in 1860-61, Buchanan refused to use force to hold them in the Union. He hoped they would grow discouraged and return to the Union. He felt that a warlike policy might cause all the slave states to secede, making a peaceful settlement impossible. His policy delayed the Civil War until after his successor, Abraham Lincoln, took office.

The only bachelor President, Buchanan was almost 66 years old when he succeeded his fellow Democrat, Franklin Pierce. The public respected him for his faithful service in both houses of Congress, as Secretary of State, and in important diplomatic posts. People found him reserved at first meeting, but warm and friendly when they knew him better. His nephew described him as "tall—over six feet, broad shouldered, with a portly, dignified bearing . . . ; his eyes were blue, intelligent, and kindly, with the peculiarity that one was far and the other near sighted, which resulted in a slight habitual inclination of the head to one side . . ."

The storm over slavery gathered during Buchanan's administration. Abolitionist authors aroused New England. The Lincoln-Douglas debates in Illinois focused attention on the moral wrongness of slavery. Adding to the national unrest, wild speculation in western land

and railroads brought on an economic panic. Many banks, factories, and railroads failed. Thousands of unemployed workers stood in bread lines for free food.

On the brighter side, women wore lavish outfits with hoop skirts, and beaver hats trimmed with ostrich feathers. Pony express riders carried the mail through the expanding West. Queen Victoria sent greetings to Buchanan over the first Atlantic cable. In winter, Americans went riding in horse-drawn sleighs and sang a new tune called "Jingle Bells."

Early Life

James Buchanan was born on April 23, 1791, in a log cabin deep in a mountain gap near Mercersburg, Pa. His father, James Buchanan, Sr., had come from Ireland in 1783 at the invitation of an uncle living near Gettysburg, Pa. He married Elizabeth Speer, a neighbor of his uncle, and opened a country store.

Young James, the second of 11 children, learned arithmetic and bookkeeping while working at his father's store. The boy studied Greek and Latin under the village pastor. He attended Dickinson College in

— IMPORTANT DATES IN BUCHANAN'S LIFE —

- 1791** (April 23) Born near Mercersburg, Pa.
- 1820** Elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.
- 1831** Appointed minister to Russia.
- 1834** Elected to the United States Senate.
- 1845** Appointed Secretary of State.
- 1853** Appointed minister to Great Britain.
- 1856** Elected President of the United States.
- 1868** (June 1) Died in Lancaster, Pa.

Buccaneers became notorious in the 1600's for their daring raids on vessels and cities in the Caribbean Sea area. After putting a ship out of action, the buccaneers would loot it, then set it afire.



Bettmann Archive

spots of blood which turned black under the skin. The disease usually causes swellings of the lymph glands, called *buboes*, from which bubonic plague is named.

Outside of the United States, plague is transmitted to human beings chiefly by fleas from infected rats. About three fourths of such cases are of the bubonic type. In the United States, a less dangerous form of the disease, *sylvatic plague*, is found in wild rodents in the Pacific Coast area.

Rat control and sanitation help keep plague from spreading. An epidemic in a seaport is especially dangerous, because rats may spread plague from country to country in ships and trains.

Symptoms and Treatment of Plague. An attack of plague usually begins suddenly. The patient has chills and fever, headache, and body pains. At the same time, the lymph glands swell, especially in the groin, armpits, and neck. Often the buboes become open sores. A deadly type of the disease, called *pneumonic plague*, affects the lungs.

Injections of an *immune serum* (from the blood of a person who has recovered from the disease) and a vaccine provide limited resistance to attack. For treatment, doctors use sulfadiazine and antibiotics such as streptomycin. A victim of plague must be strictly isolated from other persons.

History of Bubonic Plague. The first records of plague in Europe tell of an epidemic in Athens in 430 B.C. One of the worst occurred in Rome in A.D. 262, and killed 5,000 persons a day. The Crusaders carried the disease to Europe. From 1334 to 1351, it swept over Russia, Germany, Italy, France, England, Norway, China, India, and Persia. In London, more than 150,000 persons died of plague between 1603 and 1665.

Plague almost vanished in the late 1800's, but in 1894 it appeared in Hong Kong, one of the world's great ports. From there, ships carried it to the rest of the world, especially India. More than 10,000,000 persons in India died from the plague during the next 20 years.

In 1907, the Second Indian Plague Commission of the British government proved that rat fleas carry the disease. Since then, enlightened countries have controlled it with strict quarantines and campaigns to exterminate rats. But there are still cases in every continent except Australia, and epidemics in Asia and Africa. By international agreement, an outbreak of

plague in any port receives world-wide publicity.

Plague entered New York City from South America in 1899, and San Francisco from Honolulu or Hong Kong in 1900. It has also appeared in New Orleans and Seattle. The work of the United States Public Health Service on quarantines and sanitation measures has succeeded in stamping out the disease whenever it has appeared in the United States.

AUSTIN EDWARD SMITH

See also EPIDEMIC; FLEA; RAT.

BUCCANEER, *BUCK uh NEER*, is the name given to sea wanderers who preyed upon vessels in the Caribbean Sea in the 1600's.

The name *buccaneer* comes from the French word *boucan*, which means a *place for curing meat*. The earliest *boucaniers*, or buccaneers, lived on West Indian islands. They stole cattle, smoked the meat, and sold it to passing ships. English, French, and Dutch buccaneers boldly robbed the heavy Spanish galleons of gold and jewels, and went on to attack and burn Spanish colonies. One of the most famous buccaneers was Henry Morgan, whose exploits included the capture and destruction of the city of Panama in 1671. Morgan was actually given a knighthood by the King of England.

Before 1700, the buccaneers began to attack ships of all nations. Then the British, French, and Dutch governments classified the buccaneers as pirates, and they were treated as pirates.

JOHN R. ALDEN

See also PIRATE; DRAKE, SIR FRANCIS; GALLEON; HAWKINS, SIR JOHN; MORGAN, SIR HENRY.

BUCEPHALUS. See ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

BUCHAN, *BUK un, JOHN* (1875-1940), BARON TWEEDSMUIR, was a Scottish author and statesman who served as governor-general of Canada. He had an especially brilliant career as a writer of historical novels. His biographies of Sir Walter Scott, Oliver Cromwell, and Julius Caesar are also outstanding. He also wrote the adventure novels *Prestor John* (1910), *The 39 Steps* (1915), and *Greenmantle* (1916), and the 4-volume *A History of the Great War* (1921-1922).

From 1935 until his death, Buchan served as governor-general of Canada. He favored Canadian self-rule, and declared in a public speech that "Canadians should recognize that as a sovereign people, they must decide their own attitude toward world affairs." He was born at Perth, Scotland, and studied at the universities of Glasgow and Oxford.

LUCIEN BRAULT

le, Pa., and was expelled for breaking the rules. But he returned to take high scholastic honors.

After graduation in 1809, Buchanan studied law in Lancaster, Pa. He began to practice law there in 1812. His careful business habits enabled him to build a fortune which at his death totaled \$300,000.

Political and Public Career

Soldier and Legislator. Buchanan supported the Federalist party, which favored a strong central government. Like most Federalists, he opposed a second war with Great Britain. But when the War of 1812 came, he volunteered as a private to help defend Baltimore. He served in the Pennsylvania legislature for two terms, from 1814 to 1816.

Tragedy. Buchanan retired from politics in 1816 and returned to his law practice in Lancaster. A personal tragedy turned his path back toward public service. He had fallen in love with Ann Coleman, the daughter of an iron manufacturer in Lancaster. They became engaged in 1819. One day, after a quarrel, Ann fled to

BUCHANAN, JAMES

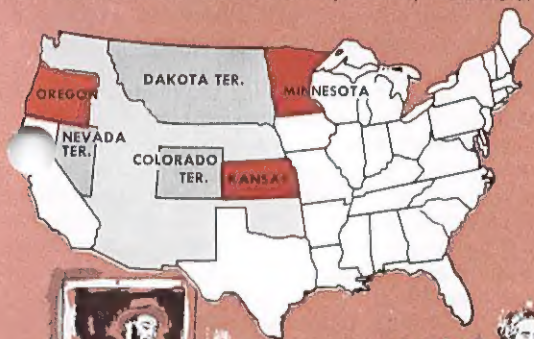
Philadelphia to stay with a married sister. She died there. Gossips hinted that she had committed suicide, although there was never any proof of this. Buchanan carried his grief throughout his life. Partly to get away from the scene of his romance, he returned to politics.

Congressman and Diplomat. Buchanan ran successfully for the United States House of Representatives in 1820. During his 10 years of service there, he broke with the dying Federalist party. In 1824, he supported the presidential candidacy of Andrew Jackson, the leader of the new Democratic party. He continued his support even after Jackson was defeated by John Quincy Adams. Jackson was elected President in 1828.

President Jackson appointed Buchanan minister to Russia in 1831 as a reward for his loyal support. Buchanan, a man of simple tastes, did not enjoy the formalities of the court of Czar Nicholas I. But he achieved results. In 1832, Buchanan negotiated the first trade treaty between the United States and Russia.

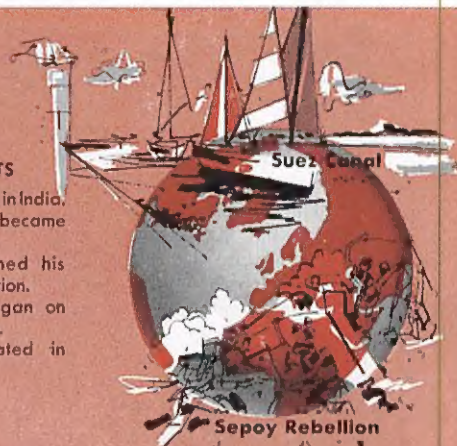
THE WORLD OF PRESIDENT BUCHANAN

U.S. population was about 32,400,000 in 1861. Three new states joined the Union during Buchanan's administration: Minnesota in 1858, Oregon in 1859, and Kansas in 1861. Congress created three new U.S. territories in 1861: Colorado, Nevada, and Dakota.



WORLD EVENTS

- 1857 Sepoy Rebellion in India.
- 1858 British Columbia became a British colony.
- 1858 Darwin published his theory of evolution.
- 1859 Construction began on the Suez Canal.
- 1861 Serfs emancipated in Russia.

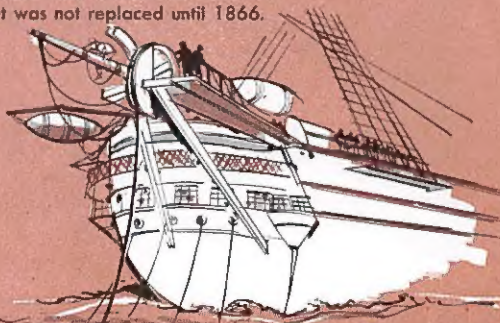


The Confederate States were organized in 1861 with Jefferson Davis as President.



Lincoln-Douglas Debates, held in Illinois in 1858, focused attention on the question of slavery.

First Atlantic Cable was laid between Newfoundland and Ireland in 1858. It failed, but was not replaced until 1866.



John Brown seized Harpers Ferry in 1859. His attempt to start a slave rebellion failed, and he was hanged for treason.

The Pony Express system, carrying mail from St. Joseph, Mo., to Sacramento, Calif., was established in 1860.





The Mercersburg Academy

James Buchanan Was Born in Stony Batter, Pa., a pioneer settlement which lay deep in a mountain gap about four miles west of Mercersburg, Pa. The cabin was moved several times in later years, and now stands on the campus of The Mercersburg Academy.



Library of Congress

Buchanan's Niece, Harriet Lane, served as hostess for the only bachelor President. She entertained many important guests, including the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII of Great Britain.

Senator. Buchanan sailed home in November, 1833. In December, 1834, the Pennsylvania legislature elected him to fill a vacancy in the United States Senate. He served there until 1845. Buchanan became one of Jackson's leading supporters, and served for a time as chairman of the committee on foreign affairs. He tried to quiet the angry debates over slavery, declaring that laws could not change the moral beliefs of the people.

In 1844, Buchanan's supporters in Pennsylvania mentioned him as a "favorite son" candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination. Buchanan withdrew his name before the convention met. Democrat James K. Polk won the election, and offered Buchanan the post of Secretary of State. Buchanan accepted, and resigned from the Senate in 1845.

Secretary of State. While Buchanan was Secretary of State, the country acquired much new territory. As one of his first tasks, he completed the steps needed to make Texas a state. This angered Mexico, which had never recognized Texan independence. Negotiations for a peaceful settlement failed, and the Mexican War resulted (see MEXICAN WAR). After the war, the United States acquired the entire Southwest.

At this time, the United States and Great Britain jointly occupied the Oregon region. President Polk claimed that the United States should have the entire region. Buchanan steered negotiations with the British, and eventually agreed to a compromise line that forms the present Canadian boundary. See POLK, JAMES KNOX ("Oregon Fever").

Minister to Great Britain. The Whig party regained the presidency in 1849, and Buchanan retired to Wheatland, his estate near Lancaster, Pa. In 1852, he ran for the Democratic presidential nomination. But Franklin Pierce won the nomination and the election. He appointed Buchanan minister to Great Britain.

In London, Buchanan tried for two years to modify the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850. This treaty provided that neither nation should occupy territory in Central America. After the treaty had been signed, the British claimed that it did not affect possessions they already held. The Americans replied that they would not have ratified the treaty if they had known

this. Buchanan tried to get the British to give up these possessions, but failed. See CLAYTON-BULWER TREATY.

While in Europe, Buchanan also helped write the Ostend Manifesto of 1854. This document recommended that the United States should offer to purchase Cuba from Spain. It warned the Spaniards that the island might be seized if disorders ever threatened peace in the United States. Americans condemned the manifesto after newspapers reported, not quite correctly, that Buchanan had advised the President to seize Cuba if Spain would not sell it. See OSTEND MANIFESTO.

Election of 1856. Many leading Democrats became unpopular as presidential candidates because they had supported the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 (see KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT). But Buchanan had been in London when Congress passed this bill, and had taken no stand on it. He returned from Great Britain in April, 1856, and the Democrats nominated him for President the next month. They chose John C. Breckinridge, former Kentucky Congressman, for Vice-President. The Republicans nominated two former Senators, John C. Frémont of California and William L. Dayton of New Jersey. The Whigs and the Know-Nothing party both supported former President Millard Fillmore and Andrew J. Donelson, former minister to Prussia.

The Democrats appealed to the desire of conservatives to preserve the Union. The party tried to avoid the slavery question. The Republicans openly fought slavery, and used campaign posters with such slogans as "Freedom, Freemen, and Frémont." The Know-

BUCHANAN'S ELECTION

Place of Nominating Convention . . . Cincinnati

Ballot on Which Nominated 17th

Opponents John C. Frémont (Republican) and Millard Fillmore (Know-Nothing).

Electoral Vote Buchanan, 174; Frémont, 114; Fillmore, 8.

Popular Vote Buchanan, 1,832,955; Frémont, 1,339,932; Fillmore, 871,731.

Age at Inauguration 65

ings attacked both sides. Buchanan fell short of a popular majority, but won a large electoral majority.

Buchanan's Administration (1857-1861)

The Struggle Over Slavery continued with increasing fury throughout Buchanan's administration. He tried to unite Democrats from the North and the South by balancing his appointments to public office. But many persons felt that he favored the Southerners. At White House social functions, Southerners often outnumbered Northerners. Buchanan's support of the Dred Scott decision seemed further to hint at Southern favoritism (see DRED SCOTT DECISION).

Buchanan's actions on statehood for Kansas convinced still more people that he favored the South. For three years, North and South had argued over whether Kansas should be admitted to the Union as a free or a slave state. Buchanan had endorsed the principle of *popular sovereignty*, which held that the people of a territory should vote whether to allow slavery.

In 1857, proslavery settlers in Kansas drew up the Lecompton constitution, which would have permitted slavery in the new state. This proposition was submitted to Kansas voters for their approval. But the antislavery settlers refused to vote, and the proslavery group won the election. Buchanan then recommended that Congress accept the Lecompton constitution for Kansas. Senator Stephen A. Douglas, an Illinois Democrat, defied the President and opposed this procedure. Largely because of his influence, Congress refused to approve the Lecompton constitution. Congress sent the constitution back to the people of Kansas in 1858, and they defeated it. See KANSAS ("Bleeding Kansas").

Buchanan's stand on the Kansas question greatly angered the North. In the congressional elections of 1858, Northern candidates opposed to the President won a majority in both houses. The hostile Congress rejected Buchanan's program to enlarge the army and navy, build a Pacific railroad, and develop canals and roads across Panama and Nicaragua. On the other hand, Buchanan vetoed several bills, including one to give free homesteads to settlers on western land.

Foreign Affairs. Buchanan developed firm policies in foreign affairs. His experience as a diplomat helped him establish better relations with Great Britain. The problem of British possessions in Central America was solved when Britain signed treaties with Nicaragua and Honduras that Americans approved.

Such disorder existed in Central America that Euro-

BUCHANAN, JAMES

pean nations threatened to use troops to protect their citizens there. Buchanan urged Congress to intervene to keep order. Otherwise, he said, Europeans would intervene in defiance of the Monroe Doctrine (see MONROE DOCTRINE). This stand foreshadowed the "Big Stick" policy of President Theodore Roosevelt. But Congress refused to allow Buchanan to carry out this policy.

Life in the White House. The gloom of the White House during Franklin Pierce's administration gave way to a brilliant social life when Buchanan took office. Buchanan, who never married, asked his niece and ward, Harriet Lane, to serve as his hostess. Under her guidance, one reception and ball followed another. Buchanan added a conservatory to the White House to provide flowers for these affairs. The most spectacular parties centered around the visit of the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII of Great Britain. The prince brought such a large party that Buchanan had to sleep in a hallway to provide proper quarters for his guests.

Election of 1860. By 1860, neither Northern nor Southern Democrats considered Buchanan for renomination, nor did he wish it. Southern Democrats nominated Vice-President Breckinridge for President, and Senator Joseph Lane of Oregon as his running mate. Northern Democrats chose a ticket of Senator Stephen A. Douglas and former Senator Herschel V. Johnson of Georgia. The Constitutional Union party named Senator John Bell of Tennessee and former Senator Edward Everett of Massachusetts. Abraham Lincoln of Illinois and Senator Hannibal Hamlin of Maine led the Republican ticket to victory in the election.

Prelude to War. Buchanan faced the gravest responsibility of his career during the period between Lincoln's election and inauguration. South Carolina seceded from the Union shortly after Lincoln's victory, and six other Southern States soon followed. These states established the Confederate States of America.

In his annual message to Congress in December, 1860, Buchanan declared that there was no "right of secession," as Southerners claimed. But he also pointed out that the Constitution provided no legal way to prevent it. He recommended revising the Constitution in a way agreeable to both North and South as the only alternative to war. He said that the South's refusal to accept defeat at the polls would destroy the tradition of self-government. But he felt it equally destructive to hold Southerners to citizenship by force.

Buchanan based his policy of caution and inaction on two beliefs. First, he felt that by keeping calm, he could retain the loyalty of the eight slave states still in the Union. Second, he believed that if left alone, the seven Confederate states would soon disagree among themselves, and move toward reunion.

On Dec. 26, 1860, a small garrison of Union troops moved from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter, in Charleston Harbor. South Carolina sent commissioners to Buchanan to demand that the garrison be withdrawn. Buchanan refused to surrender the fort. His action caused two Southern Cabinet members to resign because they thought Buchanan was too hard on the South. Secretary of State Lewis Cass had resigned because he thought the policy not hard enough. Buchanan filled the three posts with men of strong Union loyalty.

BUCHANAN'S CABINET

Secretary of State.....	*Lewis Cass Jeremiah S. Black (1860)
Secretary of the Treasury.....	Howell Cobb Philip F. Thomas (1860) John A. Dix (1861)
Secretary of War.....	John B. Floyd Joseph Holt (1861)
Attorney General.....	Jeremiah S. Black *Edwin M. Stanton (1860)
Postmaster General.....	Aaron V. Brown Joseph Holt (1859) Horatio King (1861)
Secretary of the Navy.....	Isaac Toucey
Secretary of the Interior.....	Jacob Thompson

*Has a separate biography in WORLD BOOK.

BUCHANAN, JAMES

Buchanan agreed to let the steamer *Star of the West* try to relieve the hard-pressed garrison at Fort Sumter. Confederate batteries opened fire on the vessel on Jan. 9, 1861, and forced it to turn back. Buchanan refused to regard this as an act of war, because no blood had been shed. For one thing, he did not have a large enough army to fight a war. More important, he wished to hand the government over to Lincoln with an opportunity still available to find a peaceful solution.

During the month after Buchanan left office, he observed with satisfaction that Lincoln continued his policy. When Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, Buchanan wrote that Lincoln now "had no alternative but to accept the war instigated by South Carolina or the Southern Confederacy." Buchanan publicly urged his fellow Democrats "to support the President with all the men & means at the command of the Country in a vigorous and successful prosecution of the war."

Later Years

Buchanan retired to Wheatland after Lincoln's inauguration and followed the events of the Civil War. He spent much time writing a book in defense of his policies, *Mr. Buchanan's Administration on the Eve of the Rebellion*. Harriet Lane and a nephew, James Buchanan Henry, lived with him during his last years.

Buchanan died on June 1, 1868. He was buried in Woodward Hill Cemetery in Lancaster, Pa. Wheatland has been restored and furnished as it was when Buchanan lived there.

PHILIP S. KLEIN

Related Articles in WORLD BOOK include:

Breckinridge, John Cabell	Fort Sumter
Brown, John	Kansas-Nebraska Act
Civil War	Lincoln, Abraham
Clayton-Bulwer Treaty	Mexican War
Confederate States of America	Ostend Manifesto
Douglas, Stephen Arnold	President of the United States
Fort Moultrie	Stanton, Edwin McMasters

Outline

- I. Early Life
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 - A. Soldier and Legislator
 - B. Tragedy
 - C. Congressman and Diplomat
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 - B. Foreign Affairs
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 - E. Prelude to War
- IV. Later Years

Questions

- What personal tragedy marred Buchanan's early life?
 Why did Buchanan advise patience toward the South?
 Why did Congress reject Buchanan's legislative program during the last two years of his term?
 What did Buchanan achieve as minister to Russia?
 Why was Buchanan well qualified for the presidency?
 What role did Secretary of State Buchanan play in the territorial expansion of the United States?
 Why did Buchanan not take a stand in the debates over the Kansas-Nebraska Bill?
 Why did he once sleep in a White House hallway?
 When did Buchanan decide civil war was unavoidable?



Eastfoto

A Bucharest Open-Air Market Attracts Shoppers. People line the market stalls in autumn to buy fresh vegetables. Farmers count on sales at these markets to add to their income.

BUCHAREST, *BOO kuh rest*, or, in Romanian, BUCUREȘTI (pop. 1,236,908; alt. 276 ft.), is the capital and largest city of Romania. It lies in the southeastern part of the country, and stands on both sides of the Dâmbovița River. For location, see ROMANIA (color map). Most of the people of Bucharest are Romanians, but some Greeks, Germans, Hungarians, Turks, Russians, and Poles live there.

Much of Bucharest is modern and well planned, with great churches and fine buildings. But the older sections still have narrow, crooked streets. Before World War II, Romanians often called the city *Little Paris*, because of its gay social life and cultural leadership. There is a university in Bucharest and the city is the seat of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The chief products of Bucharest include machinery, textiles, chemicals, leather and metal goods, and mill products.

In 1861, Bucharest became the capital of Romania, when the country was created by the union of Moldavia and Walachia.

ALVIN Z. RUBINSTEIN

See also ROMANIA (picture, Empty Boulevard).

BUCHAREST, TREATY OF. See BALKANS (The Second Balkan War).

BUCHENWALD, *BOO kun VAHLT*, was a Nazi concentration camp located near Weimar, Germany. The Nazis established the camp, used for political and racial prisoners, soon after they came to power in 1933. Prisoners worked as slave laborers in nearby arms factories and quarries.

More than 100,000 people from German-occupied countries throughout Europe died at Buchenwald from starvation and other causes. American troops liberated about 21,000 survivors on April 13, 1945.